



May 27, 2005

Dear Friend,

We are writing to encourage your participation in a public meeting co-sponsored by USDA Rural Development and the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA). The meeting will be held on:

Date: June 21, 2005
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Location: Albuquerque Convention Center
401 Second Street NW
West Complex 2nd Level Ballroom A-B-C
Albuquerque, NM 87102

The purpose of the meeting is to increase awareness of USDA's capital programs that support business development, with the objective of increasing financing sources for minority-owned firms in rural communities. The meeting will include two primary components:

- Listening Forum.

Beginning at 9:00 a.m., there will be a listening forum in which participants from the minority business community will share their experiences with USDA Rural Development and offer their suggestions for improving its accessibility and level of service to minority businesses.

To ensure that as many individuals as possible have an opportunity to participate, we must ask that speakers pre-register and limit their oral statement to 5 minutes. We are also asking that speakers submit five copies of their remarks so their comments can be provided to the official recorder and panelists. There are no restrictions on written comments submitted for the record. All comments, written or oral, will be made a part of the record and will receive a response. Detailed instructions for speakers are attached.

- Agency Expo.

Following the listening forum and lunch (which will be provided), there will be an “Agency Expo” from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. During this time, business development staff from USDA Rural Development, MBDA, and other participating agencies will be available to provide information, answer questions, and provide hands-on guidance about current opportunities available to minority-owned rural businesses.

Your participation will assist USDA Rural Development in making its programs more accessible to rural minority business enterprises. It is also an opportunity for you to learn about a wide range of existing opportunities that may be relevant to your current or future business plans.

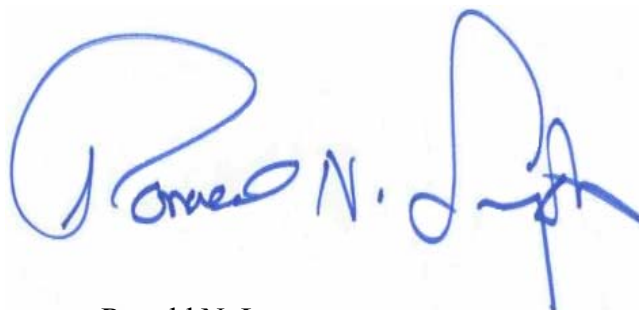
Please note that seating is limited to the first 400 participants so if you are interested in attending please register as soon as possible. You can do so by going on line at: <http://www.rdcnm.org/listeningession/> or by contacting Celina Conger at 505-761-4975, or celina.conger@nm.usda.gov.

We sincerely hope you are able to join us for this exciting event.

Sincerely,



Gilbert Gonzalez
Acting Under Secretary
USDA Rural Development



Ronald N. Langston
National Director
Minority Business Development Agency

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**U.S. Department of Commerce
Director, Office of Civil Rights
Room 6012, Washington, D.C. 20230
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